We invite you to come to lunch and interact with our panel as they talk about the MDB: The Plan, The People, The Community – Are we one yet?

NEWSLETTER  Issue 19, April/May 2014

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Welcome to the Murray-Darling Basin Futures Collaborative Research Network (MDBfutures). In our monthly Newsletter we profile our people, highlight points of interest and let you know about coming events. This Newsletter is about keeping you informed, letting you know who to contact and what
workshops / seminars are coming up.

'MDBfutures is putting communities in the picture' by Dr Peter O'Brien

One of the most important features of the Murray-Darling Basin Futures Collaborative Research Network ('MDBfutures') is its focus on the people and communities of the Basin – those who live and work there. These are the people who most deeply understand the interaction between water, production and the environment – and the people who are most directly and personally affected by government decisions to change arrangements.

While we have drawn on both environmental and economic research, we have also had a major program of social research in the Basin. MDBfutures Regional Wellbeing Survey is a detailed examination of how Basin communities are feeling and responding to the challenges and changes of water reform. Our work on governance – and especially localism - with Basin communities and local government, has our researchers work with the people experiencing water reform on their doorsteps.

So with the Basin Plan - the latest and largest water reform in our history – now in place and communities adjusting to its implementation

- Where are Basin communities now?
- What does the Basin Plan mean for these communities?
- What challenges and opportunities confront them – and how are they responding?

We have brought together a panel with deep knowledge and expertise who can answer these questions. In MDBfutures, we think that the combination of community perspectives and academic research are a powerful way to understand what is happening. The panel will provide an opportunity to hear a range of views about the state of the Basin from a community perspective – and to join that with expert academic analysis.

We are particularly interested to hear how communities are moving forward with the implementation of the Basin Plan – and what issues and challenges confront them. Our panellists combine practical wisdom with academic focus:

- **Gerry Lawson** AM (LDA MAICD), Chairman, SunRice
- **Tony Siviour**, Chief Executive Officer, Renmark Paringa Council
- **Cheryl Buchanan**, Guwamu (Kooma) Nation, Chair Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations
- **Katrina Maguire**, General Manager, Engagement Strategy & Communications, Murray-Darling Basin Authority
- **Professor Mark Evans**, Director Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, University of Canberra
- **Dr Jacki Schirmer**, Senior Research Fellow Murray-Darling Basin Futures Collaborative Research Network, Centre for Research and Action in Public Health, University of Canberra

We are delighted to have **Ms Virginia Haussegger** - award winning journalist, author and social commentator - facilitate this event.

Lunch will be available from 12:00pm with the panel event commencing at 12:30pm sharp on Friday, 30th May 2014, in the Peninsula Room at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

**RSVP by 23 May 2014** to mdbfutures@canberra.edu.au  **RSVP is essential to attend this event.**

Please join us to listen, lunch and add your thoughts.
Gerry Lawson has been a Director of SunRice since 1985. He was appointed Chairman in 2001 and has overseen a dynamic period in the business's evolution into a global rice food company with operations in Australia, the United States, the Middle East, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, and annual sales revenue of $1 billion.

Gerry is also Chairman of SunFoods LLC, a rice milling, distribution and marketing company majority-owned by SunRice; a member of The Global Foundation Advisory Board; a Member of the Rice Marketing Board for the State of NSW; and the SunRice representative to the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia Inc.

Tony Siviour is the CEO of the Renmark Paringa Council in the Riverland region of the Murray-Darling Basin region of South Australia, and his career in local government spans 22 years and 5 local government areas. Tony has been instrumental in the formation of the the SEE Renmark 2024 committee which has positioned the Renmark Paringa community to respond to the challenges of the Murray-Darling Basin plan implementation.

Cheryl Buchanan is a Guwamu (Kooma) woman from south-west Queensland and Chair of the Northern Murray–Darling Basin Aboriginal Nations ('NBAN'). The core business of NBAN is cultural and natural resource management, and its primary focus is to ensure that aboriginal people and communities are more widely consulted, and genuinely involved, in the engagement process of water management issues.

Cheryl is a founding member of the National Cultural Flows Planning and Research Committee; was Chairperson of the Kooma Traditional Owners Association (2004-2012); and Treasurer of the Kooma Traditional Owners Association (2012-2014). Until recently, Cheryl was also the Deputy Chair of the First Peoples Water Engagement Council and a member of the Murray–Darling Basin Community Committee.

Katrina Maguire is the General Manager of Communications, Engagement, Research and Compliance at the Murray–Darling Basin Authority. Katrina has over 20 years’ experience working in natural resource management, policy and stakeholder engagement in the Commonwealth Public Service, Murray-Darling Basin Authority, Murray-Darling Basin Commission and, for 11 years, for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, where she worked primarily in the environmental policy and strategy areas of Commonwealth fisheries management.

Katrina has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sydney, majoring in environmental and physical geography and social Anthropology and a Masters in Environmental Law from the Australian National University.

Mark Evans is the Director of the Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, and Project
Leader of the MDBfutures 'Building adaptive and sustainable communities in the Murray-Darling' project.

Mark is an expert in public governance and development with a strong focus on collaborative environments that harness the creative energies of partners to affect progressive and innovative social change. He has published four monographs and 14 edited collections in the field of governance and has worked with over 24 countries internationally on critical governance problems. He edits the international journal 'Policy Studies' and has honorary positions at the universities of Bath, Hull, Renmin and York.

Read a short profile on Professor Evans

Snapshot: Dr Jacki Schirmer

Jacki Schirmer is a Senior Research Fellow with the MDBfutures CRN at the University of Canberra, and has been involved in research examining social dimensions of natural resource management in Australia for the last 12 years. Jacki’s research examines the links between environmental policy, change in access to natural resources, and human health and wellbeing, most recently through her work on the nationwide Regional Wellbeing Survey.

In her previous roles at the Australian National University and Bureau of Rural Sciences, she focused on understanding the social impacts on rural communities, of changes in access to natural resources.

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Snapshot: Ms Virginia Haussegger

Virginia Haussegger is an award winning journalist, author and social commentator. With more than 20 years in news broadcasting, her work has taken her around the globe -- from the Middle East, Iraq, Europe, Afghanistan and Washington - reporting for Australia's leading current affairs programs on Channel 9, the 7 Network and the ABC. Virginia's outspoken views on women and their role in contemporary society have been widely debated in Australia. Her book, "Wonder Woman: The myth of having it all" was launched by Julia Gillard at the National Press Club in 2005.

Virginia presents ABC TV News in Canberra, and hosts a variety of broadcast discussion events and panel forums. She is widely published across Australian print media and has been a weekly columnist for The Canberra Times, and contributor to The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald.

In her capacity as Adjunct Professor with the Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, at the University of Canberra, Virginia has facilitated forums examining the role of Gender in leadership, and the contribution of women to public sector excellence. She regularly addresses business and government forums on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Virginia is a Board member of the National Committee of UN Women Australia, and patron of Save The Children, ACT, in addition to a busy portfolio of community and charity engagements.

Ms Haussegger appears by arrangement with Claxton Speakers International.

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International RiverSymposium 2014

The deadline for Riversymposium abstract and poster submissions has now been extended. The new deadline of 16 May allows more time to finalise abstracts following the busy Easter period. So if you didn't get around to submitting your abstract in the first round, you may still be in with a chance to present a talk or a poster during the 17th International Riversymposium in Canberra.

We want to spread the news of our new deadline far and wide, so if you lend us a hand by sharing our post on social media between now and May 16, you’ll go in to the draw to win a free Riversymposium registration! Visit our Facebook and Twitter pages to find the relevant post. (Maximum 1 entry per day).

Oral presentations and poster submissions are invited from authors around the world. Successful poster
presenters will also be invited to give a **five-minute speed talk** in the main Riversymposium program. This is an exceptional opportunity for river professionals to present their work, knowledge, and achievements and to initiate discussion and debate in their area of interest.

If you’d like to find out who you could be presenting alongside, take a look at the diverse and high-calibre list of **keynote speakers** on the Riversymposium website. This list is continually being updated as more speakers come on board.

Earlybird registrations are now open and will be accepted until **30 June 2014**. A payment plan option is also available for Australian residents who are unable to pay the full registration fee up front – please contact riversymposium@ozaccom.com.au for more details.

For everything else you need to know, visit the Riversymposium website at [www.riversymposium.com](http://www.riversymposium.com).

**Sustainability Survey**

Last month, the ‘**Towards Place Based Education in the Murray Darling Basin’** project launched their key survey aimed at mapping understandings of sustainability throughout the basin.

The survey is aimed at community organisations of all shapes and sizes. If you are a community organisation, are in the MDB, and didn’t get the email notification please consider clicking this link and completing the survey [http://canberra.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_StGacFwIqMsnVUY](http://canberra.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_StGacFwIqMsnVUY). It should take no more than five minutes to complete.

This survey is the key data-gathering instrument for the first phase of the project and will be followed by work with existing education programs run by the MDBA and case studies in schools. The aim of the survey is to explore, and map, the ways in which sustainability is understood in MDB communities (including Indigenous, rural, small towns and regional centres). Through this project we aim to foster stronger community collaboration and improve education through developing shared understandings of sustainability.


**Profile: Professor Mark Evans**

**What excites you about your work with MDBfutures?**

Water reform in the Murray Darling Basin is a wicked problem which cannot be solved through either a technical fix or a 'top-down' delivery system. It therefore provides a living laboratory for evaluating man-made governance dilemmas. As a governance expert I am keen to help governments learn from their history, the prevailing evidence and from international experience to improve the governance of change. This is fertile ground for governance research which can hopefully inform a more sustainable basin.

**What is involved in your role within the CRN / Project?**

I lead the governance theme in the CRN and a specific project on how we build sustainable and adaptable communities in the Basin. My research focuses on one of the missing links in the sustainability puzzle - the role of community localism. Community engagement in policy and delivery is crucial to the achievement of social progress, not least because the Basin Plan requires co-production and adaptive behaviour from citizens. Moreover, the critical challenges confronting policy-makers in a complex, fragmented world require the most adaptive form of power to enable citizens to blend their capacities to achieve common purpose. This is called soft power and is central to the achievement of change governance. By change governance I mean the introduction of new methods of governing that "enable" (i.e. remove barriers to participation), "empower" (i.e. devolve authority), "engage" (i.e. provide incentives and disincentives to achieve the right behaviours) and "exemplify" (i.e. distil a whole of governance responsibility for achieving and maintaining the valued culture) a culture of "seeing like a citizen".

The governance terrain remains fraught with dilemmas. Can politics change to get us focused on resolving...
environmental, social and economic problems together, rather than fueling the endless demand for government to take action? Can governments work without having the stick of hierarchical control as their dominant tool? What are the new strategies for change? Could these include experimental modes of governance, behaviour change or new forms of citizen-centric deliberative exchange and action? Can we ensure that powerful groups do not dominate decision-making and issues of exclusion are addressed? Can we construct sustainable solutions that work from the local to the global? Interesting stuff hey!

What has been your favourite part of the CRN / Project so far?
I love working with scientists; I think every home should have one.

What were you doing before MDBfutures?
From 1999, I was Head of the Department of Politics and Provost of Halifax College at the University of York in the United Kingdom and Director of the World-wide Universities Public Policy Network.

Something surprising?
My Auntie Barbara (Abney-Hastings) was the 13th Countess of Loudon and last in the line of the Plantagenets i.e. she would have been Queen if it wasn’t for the reformation! This isn’t easy for a republican to admit but I thought I would take this opportunity to come out. Strangely enough; here I am at the House of Lords in London launching our new Centre last July.

Want to connect?
Call Mark on 0408 529 375 or email him at mark.evans@canberra.edu.au

Did you know?

- Want to hear about sustainable communities? What 'valuing' environmental water means? Or how we go about integrating economic, social and science knowledge? Listen to our researchers discuss their work.
- Links to papers and publications written by our researchers are available via our website. Go to the project page and following the links for the project your interested in.
- You can download slides from many of our MDBfutures workshops. Please note that these slides are subject to copyright and may not be used without the permission of the author(s). Look at slides available for download.
- Copies of earlier newsletters are available from our website. Look at previous newsletters

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